

Potentiality of the Concept of SACRED MOUNTAINS As the Basis of Environmental Conservation*

Keewon Hwang**

<Contents>

I. Introduction

II. The Korean Cultures of Sacred Mountains

III. Discussion and Conclusion

I. Introduction

1. Sacredness of Natural Environment

(1) Background

Spiritual character, especially the sacredness of natural environment seems to be disappeared with the advent of modern science. Nature has been regarded as mere object of value-free observation, analysis and manipulation. Ever since, the sacredness is regarded not to exist any more, at least in the more advanced countries who experiences industrialization as well as modernization.

Contemporary sciences and engineering that advocate environmental conservation look at the nature in a similar manner. These disciplines think the nature in terms of objective system.

It is worth to think about the sacredness as the basis for environmental conservation which has not been conducted successfully.

-Philosophical studies on the environment or ecosystem are being actively conducted in the field of Humanities to seek alternative basis for environmental thoughts and actions.

* I would like to dedicate this paper to Prof. Tai-joon Kwon and Prof. An-Jae Kim, my beloved teachers and respected paragons of scholarship and humanity. This is a final edition of papers on the sacred mountains which were presented at the UNESCO expert meeting (September 2001, Wakayama, Japan) and the Hokudai-SNU 2002 Symposium (August 2002, Hokkaido University, Japan).

** Professor, Dept. of Landscape Architecture and Senior Researcher, Environmental Planning Institute, Graduate School of Environmental Studies, Seoul National University.

-Recently an international conference was held, and its topic was the sacred mountains as the candidate of World Cultural Heritage.

-There are not few cases of sacredness which are still valid in ordinary world as well as academic domain.

Especially mountains have been esteemed since ancient times as the strong objects or media which contains the sacredness.

(2) Re-emerging Concept of Sacred Mountains

The term of 'sacred mountain' has been formulated and used in the field of cultural anthropology or similar. It is re-emerging now as a conceptual tool for awareness and conservation of natural environment.

There is no fixed definition, but there are two aspects of the concept: one is the nature of 'being a mountain' (山性) and the other is the nature of 'being sacred' (聖性).

-Being a mountain is basically a matter of natural science, and can be defined in terms of geology or topography. However, when it comes to sacred mountains especially, hills lower than mountains in terms of geological configuration are to be included.

-Being sacred is quite ambiguous since it reflects the diversified cultures of the world.

Definitions of sacred mountains are expected to change.

(3) Sacred mountains as World Cultural Heritage

Recently the term sacred mountain gains some international currency. UNESCO in particular began serious studies on the eligibility of sacred mountains to be inscribed on the World Heritage List as Cultural Landscapes.

An important activity that draws attention is "UNESCO Thematic Expert Meeting on Asia-Pacific Sacred Mountains" which was held on September 2001 at the Wakayama City, Japan, under the joint sponsorship of UNESCO and Japanese Government.

2. The Sacred Mountains: Operational Definition

(1) Two dimensions of Sacred Mountain

The sacred mountain is a sort of 'special' mountain among all of the mountains on the Earth. It is special, not because it is high or odd-shaped, but because it is sacred.

Every sacred mountain has therefore two dimensions: 1) it is basically a mountain, and 2) it is sacred whatever it is.

Without say anything further, sacred mountain is one kind of mountain. Therefore, being a mountain is a necessity condition to be sacred. That is, there are a number of sacred places and, mountain is just

one of them.

Though the definition is rather ambiguous, an internationally acceptable definition is as follows:

-A mountain is a natural elevation of the earth's surface, rising more or less abruptly to a small summit area;

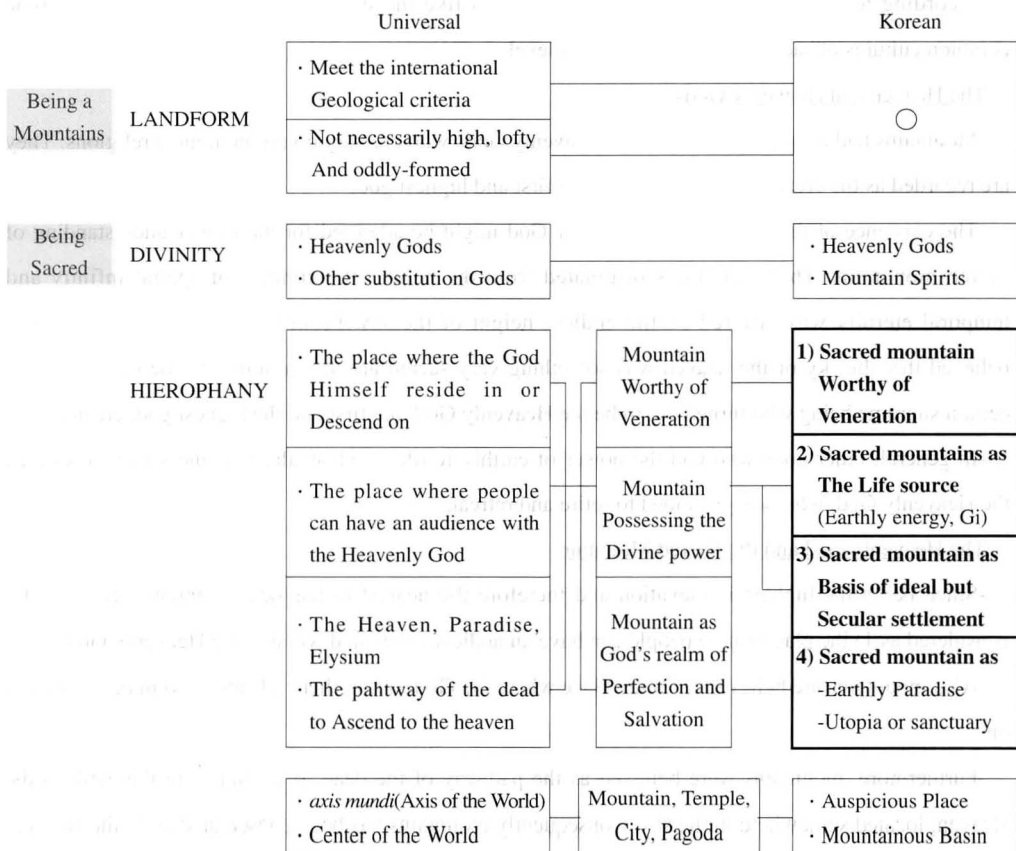
-A Mountain is considered to project at least 300 m (1000 ft) above the surrounding plain. With this scientific definition, so called 'hill' that is a similar land form but is lower than 300 meters, is eligible to be included in the category of mountain.

-It can occur as a single, isolated eminence, or in a group forming a long chain or range.

Being sacred is a sufficient condition. The empirically accepted concepts of sacred mountains both at world level and at state level are discussed here, with a general understanding of the very concept of 'sacred'.

(2) Hierophany and the Sacredness

Those mountains with such sacredness or divine power are the very special ones. Very high and lofty,



<Fig.1> Conceptual Universality of Sacred Mountain

very expansive and profound, and very odd-looking mountains are usually acknowledged as such mountains. However, some mountains that are seemingly ordinary are regarded as sacred ones in some cultures.

One important thing to keep in mind is so-called 'hierophany' (聖顯) that is the manifestation of god, or something divine in the ordinary things as mountains, caves, trees, etc. This concept proposed by Mircea Eliade is quite useful to understand and explain the sacredness of mountain. There are similar concepts as theophany (manifestation of God), kratophany (manifestation of power) or epiphany (manifestation of god or the super-natural).

It indicates that people admire and worship the mountain not because the mountain itself is sacred but because they believe that, something sacred manifests itself the mountain.

3. Universal Cultures of Sacred Mountain

(1) The Heavenly Gods and Sacred Mountain

According to studies on anthropology or religions like those of Mircea Eliade, There are some common cultures of sacred mountains at world level.

The Heaven and Heavenly Gods

-Mountains had deeply related with the Heavenly Gods who are very common in most religions. They are regarded as the creator of the world and the first and highest god.

-The existence of the Heaven and Heavenly God might be admitted for the proper understanding of sacred mountains. That sacredness originated from the height: the concept of spatial infinity and temporal eternity was inferred by the endless height of the sky. From the primitive times, people believed that the sky or the heaven was something very sacred and mysterious and the existence of a certain supreme being who turned out to be the Heavenly God, the first and the highest god, creator.

-In general, other gods who had the power of earthly fertility and secular happiness had substituted the Heavenly God, who was presumed to retire and retreat.

The Heavenly God and the Sacred Mountain

-Since being the highest in elevation and therefore the nearest to the sky, mountains are naturally considered as 1) the place where people can have an audience with and worship the Heavenly God.

-Also mountains are believed as 2) the place where the God(s) him (her) self reside(s) in or descend(s) on.

-Furthermore, mountains were believed as the pathway of the dead to ascend from the earth to the Heaven, located somewhere in the sky. Consequently mountains has been consecrated as 3) the Heaven, the Paradise, or the Elysium.

These 3 aspects of Sacred Mountains can be interpreted again as

- 1) Mountain worthy of veneration
- 2) Mountain possessing the divine power
- 3) Mountain as God's realm of perfection and salvation

(2) Viewpoint of the UNESCO

Tentative Definition of the Sacredness

-The 'sacred' is a manifestation or expression of a deeper reality that inspires reverence and awe, which gives meaning and vitality to people's lives.

-The sacred mountain is a significant natural elevation where the spiritual and physical unite.

Types of Sacred Mountains

-The sacred mountain (in the Asian-Pacific Region) sites may be categorized within the following groups:

- 1) The mountain itself is considered sacred;
- 2) The mountain has sacred associations;
- 3) The mountain has sacred areas, places, objects;
- 4) The mountain inspires sacred rituals and practices.

Themes of Sacred Mountains

-A center of the cosmos or the world;

-Paradise;

-Representing power, deity or deities;

-Identity of a nation or a group of people;

-Place of worship, where spirits or ancestors reside or pass through;

-Place for seclusion or healing;

-Source of inspiration, power or healing.

Major Points to be noted

-Above-mentioned remarks are basically tentative.

-None of these themes take greater priority than others. Also, those themes are not exhaustive nor are they exclusive.

Sacred Mountain within the System of World Cultural Heritage

- Sacred mountain tentatively takes hierarchical position as one kind of 'associative landscape', which is a part of 'cultural landscape', which in turn is a kind of 'site', which is a kind of 'cultural heritage'.

II. The Korean Cultures of Sacred Mountains

1. Mountains of Korea

(1) A Geo-cultural Sketch

Korea is a country of mountain, not only because mountains occupy almost 70% of land, but also because throughout long history the life, culture and history of Koreans have inseparably related to mountains.

Most of these mountains are quite steep with rugged but forested slopes and nearly forbid habitation.

Mountains of the Korean Peninsula form a main mountain range stretching north to south, runs full length of the east coast, where the steep slopes or cliffs have been carved out by the sea waves, and several subsidiary ranges diverge from the main range, running from east to southwest.

Considering her territorial size (The Peninsula is 1,000 km long and 160-300 km wide, and encompasses a total of 222,154 km²), Korea has a relatively large number of rivers and streams due to complex topography and monsoon climate. Most river flow from east to west and from north to south, and comparatively wide alluvial plains have been formed on the lower parts.

Very complex topography of mountains and hills, rivers and streams, however, has produced very delicate terrain, and every nook and corner of the country is able to claim its own geographical identity. So, this country of so many scenic mountains and rivers is admired as beautifully embroidered brocade.

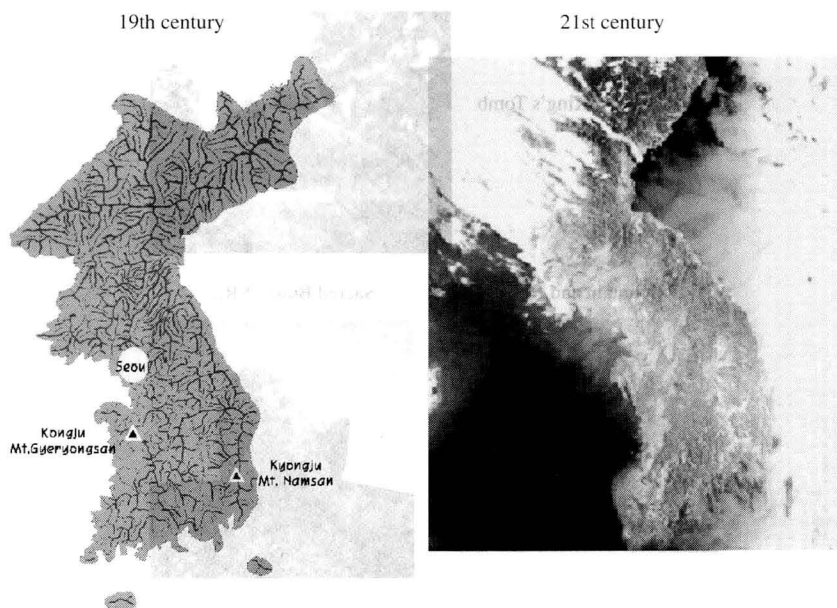
Lofty, massive, beautiful and inspiring; obstructing, conducting, dangerous, useful, deadly and providing; rich resources, venerable depositories and sheltering retreats—their mountains have always inspired gratitude, fear, respect, admiration, awe and worship from the Koreans. Mountain-worship is as ancient as anything else that we know about early Korean civilization. Koreans in ancient times were described as having the culture of paying respect to mountains and rivers (Mason, 15).

Koreans believe in being born with spirits of mountains, living on them and being buried in the mountains to be the most desirable life. To Koreans, mountain has been source of life, prosperity and fortune, or vice versa.

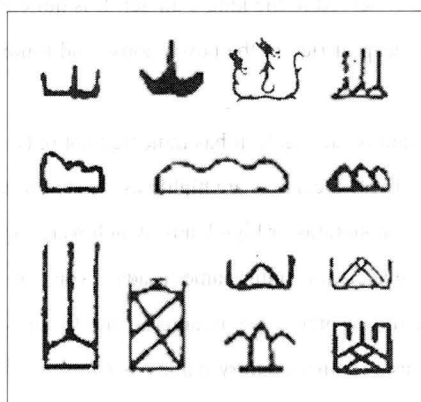
At present very fine forests are formed. This achievement is due to concentrated government effort of reforestation for the past few decades. Conservation efforts are very strong in Korea.

(2) 'Mountain' in the Korean Language

Koreans living in the Chinese cultural realm has used a number of Chinese characters to represent the mountain. Among hundred letters, The prime letter san(山, *shan*) that was made imitatively the mountain shape indicates 1) geologically defined, high and steep elevation; 2) production or raising



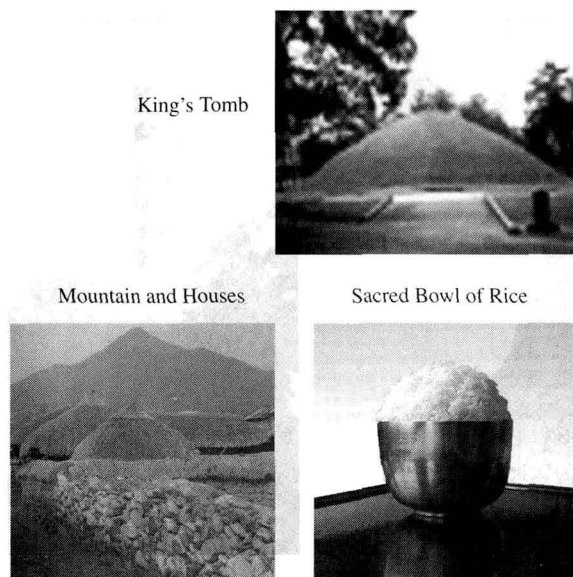
<Fig. 2> Korea, the Country of Mountain



<Fig.3> Various Forms of Shan

living things, 3) tomb, and 4) king or supreme ruler. Consequently, it became to mean gods or their temples in the mountains.

For better understanding of Korean cultures of sacred mountains, however, it is worthier to contemplate those genuine Korean vocabularies that are equivalent to the Chinese *Shan*. The Korean word 'me' [me] that also indicates the geologically defined mountain, however has some more significant suggestive meanings. It is also the tomb of the ancestor, or the sacred bowl of rice either



<Fig. 4> 'Me' and Similar Mountain Forms

consecrated to the ancestral rites or served to the king's dinner. It is quite meaningful to think about that the mounded form of mountain, heap of rice in the bowl; house and tomb are very similar one another (cf. Fig. 4).

One word that is more significant is 'dal'[dal]. It has indicated not only 'high land' or 'mountain', but also tribe country or states itself. These meanings are highly associated with the fact that a lot of villages and towns were located up on the mountains or high lands, which were especially sunny and flourishing places. With this word, used in the ancient country name 'asadal', you can find that Korea has been from the very beginning the Country of Auspicious Mountains or the Country of Morning Calm, which is shown first on the high mountains. Another country names as *Choson* (朝鮮) and *Koryo* (Korea, 高麗) spelled in the Chinese letters also had similar meaning.

(2) The Sacred Mountains in the Life and Environment of Koreans

Korean's conceptions on the mountains, not all mountains, but a lot of mountains, are 1) the something venerable; 2) life source of all living things, including mankind; 3) basis of ideal settlement; and 4) utopia per se.

If these attributes of mountains can be interpreted as the nature of sacred mountain, we are allowed to insist that Koreans have formed and held culture of sacred mountains from the early era of the civilization. In particular above-mentioned attributes 2) and 3) are life pattern or environmental pattern which by definition are culture itself. Therefore, Koreans have dealt with sacred mountains in terms of

material culture as well as spiritual culture respectively and mutually. These ideas on the sacredness of mountains are still strongly valid in Korea.

The aspect that sacred mountain is a mountain worthy of veneration (1) is commonly applicable to Korean case. The aspect that sacred mountain is a mountain possessing the divine power (2) is related with 2 aspects of Korean case. The one is that sacred mountain is the life source and the other one is that sacred mountain is the basis of ideal but secular settlement.

On these aspects, you can find some subtle differences: The source of sacredness of Korean sacred mountains depended not only on the Gods but also on the auspicious energy. This means that Koreans thought the earthly power and the heavenly power were equally reliable. Therefore, their focuses were put on the earthly or secular life and landscapes.

The aspect of sacred mountain being a God's realm of perfection and salvation is common in Korean case. Koreans thought that sacred mountains are sorts of earthly paradise or utopia or sanctuary.

The conception of *axis mundi* is not shown apparently in Korean case.

1) Sacred Mountain Worthy of Veneration

A mountain can be respected and worshiped just because of its very specific or extraordinary forms or environments. However, people in common do not deem this state of mountain sacred. Any mountain can be nominated and worshiped as sacred, when the mountain can be interpreted as a media to communicate between sacred heaven and secular earth, or as a holy residence of gods or spirit, or a selected place where something superior or the existence of gods or the power of gods are manifested (hierophany).

There are several mountains whose names mean 'a brilliant and great mountain' in Korea. Mt. *Baekdusan* (白頭山) that is the highest peak of Korean peninsular, Mt. *Taebaeksan* (太白山) that appears in the ancient and first state-founding myth, and Mt. *Bukhansan* (北漢山) that overlooks the capital city of Seoul are those mountains whose Chinese names are originated from 'bak-dal' or brilliant mountain and 'han-bak-dal' or great such mountains. Especially the original Korean name of Mt. *Bukhansan* was *Buru* (guardian spirit of mountain, mountain god) - *Khan* (great, supreme) - *Moro* (mountain), which meant mountain of heavenly god or mountain god. Here you can find such word 'Khan' that is common in the Ural-Altaic languages.

Also the original words 'mari' or 'maru' which indicate court or hall of house, head, superior, etc. are related with the sacred mountains of Korea. King is called *mari-kahn*, which means the superior governor sitting on the highest and best place in the royal hall.

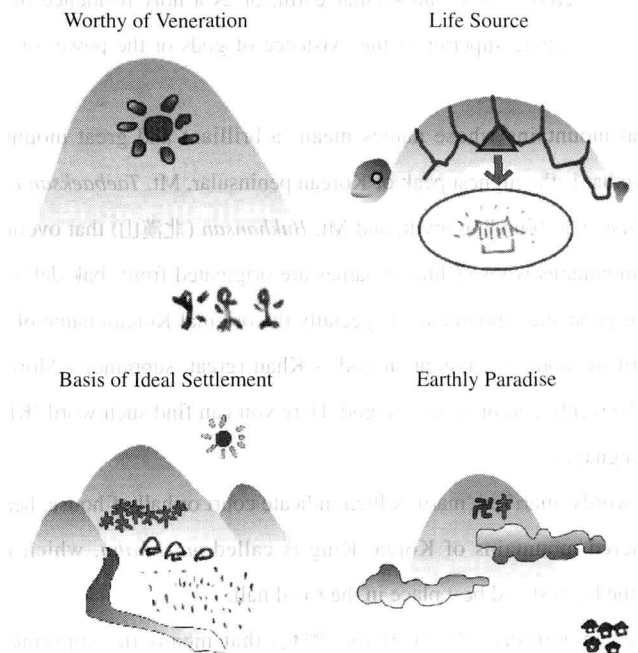
One of the sacred mountains, Mt. *Marisan* (摩利) that means the supreme mountain has the *Chamsungdan* (暫城壇) or rite platform on the summit. The myth says that *Dangoon* (檀君), the nation-

founder of Korea had performed rite to the Heavenly God here. In addition, this mountain is the guardian mountain of the Kanghwado Island, which had been the final stronghold against foreign invasions throughout the long history. In addition, Kanghwado Island has the Dolmen site that was inscribed as World Cultural Heritage in 2000. In particular, the Tripikata Koreana, of which storage building is now inscribed as UNESCO World Heritage, was published here for the hope of saving country against Mongolian invasion in the 13th century. With this cultural history, the sacred fire for the national athletic games has been lighted on the peak of this mountain.

2) Sacred Mountain as Life Source

Mountains, especially sacred mountains of Korea are highly associated with Feng Shui (風水), which was once disregarded as superstition or quasi-science, but still has validity. As is generally known Feng Shui is a theory and practice of environmental cognition and planning, based on the sacredness of mountains. That is, the sacred formation of mountains and accompanying rivers is believed to have the power to produce, store and transmit the *Gi* (氣, *qi*, a living energy as the animating force of all things), and the auspicious spot (明堂, *myongdang*, *mingtang*) is the very place where the *Gi* is concentrated.

Feng Shui, which was transformed in Korea where the terrain and climate are more friendly than in China, has focused on harmonizing human habitation with nature, and has dealt with both the house of the dead (陰宅, *yin* house or graves), and the house for the living (陽宅, *yang* house or individual



<Fig. 5> Sacredness of Korean Sacred Mountains

dwelling, villages and towns). According to this theory, graves or dwellings placed on the auspicious spot are believed to store the *Gi* and consequently those successors and residents are able to take fortunes and dispel misfortunes.

Mt. *Kyeryongsan* recommended by the Korean State Party, as a candidate for including on the tentative list of World Heritage is one of the best auspicious mountains in terms of Feng Shui.

3) Sacred Mountains as basis of ideal settlement

Transcending the limit of above-mentioned abstract attribute, Feng Shui seems to be rather rational or scientific when it is applied to the yang house than to the yin house. Strictly speaking, in most situation mountains themselves are not ideal living environment, however, mountains regarded as auspicious in terms of Feng Shui are the environmental basis of and support to the good settlements. Traditional villages built up based on this context have formed those representative cultural landscapes of Korea. Let us review the scientific aspect of village landscapes.

The desirable site for the ideal village as yang house is usually the foot of south-facing mountain: it means that those houses in the village are able to enjoy sunny and bright climate while the mountain at the back shelters the village from cold north or north-western winds blowing from the Asian Continent. This guardian mountain does not stand alone, but is flanked by mountain ridges on both sides and make the shape of ㄱ. Surrounding mountain and ridges now are the natural source of waters essential for living and farming, wild foods, firewood, leisure spaces and even the gravesites for the villagers. Usually there is a flat land in front of village and winding river or stream good for productive farming, and rolling hills in the distance.

This is the ideal configuration of village: on one hand, it is conceptually regarded as auspicious and on the other hand, it practically provides sound environment as well as beautiful landscape.

It was same with towns and cities. They could not situate and develop without mountains. In view of location advantage, mountainous basin is regarded as the best site for the whole town and mountain foot for the palaces or administration centers. There are 4 cardinal mountains surrounding the city: The guardian mountain of black turtle stands on the north, embracing the main place and the mountain of green dragon on the west, the mountain of white tiger on the east, and the mountain of red phoenix on the south respectively.

In this context, numerous mountains or ridges taking 70% of whole territory divided countless water basins and became the natural boundary of settlements.

As Koreans had to make their livings inseparably dependent upon local mountainous environment, they seemed to esteem local sacred mountains more highly than nation-level sacred mountains. That is to say, hills, mountains and ridges that form the basis of their own villages, towns and cities are none

other but the very sacred mountain to them. Accordingly, Korea throughout the country was regarded as being full of sacred mountains. But their conception of sacred mountain does not stop at the local level. Local mountains are sacred not because they are sacred from the beginning but because they are descendant from Grandfather Mountain and great grandfather mountain, which is usually regarded as the Mt. *Baekdusan*, the highest peak in the North-eastern Asian Continent. Traditional topography of Korea interpreted the terrains not as geological configuration of underground resources, but as chains of mountain ridges or watersheds; this means that mountains are esteemed as basis and source of their life on the ground, not as the underground resources.

4) Sacred Mountains as Earthly Paradise

Most of Koreans had made their secular livings in this mountain-based way, however, not a few people influenced by religions imagined mountain as the kind of ideal place for transcendental lives. Taoism established the existence of 仙 (*seon, xian, 僊*) who literally meant the mountain people or the human being transmigrated into the mountains, and esteemed mountains as the immortal deities' living and meditating places. In this process, mountains got the sacredness and transcendence. Mt. *Bongrae* (Penglai, 蓬萊), which was the Taoistic sacred mountain where the immortal plants grew, was believed as locating in Korea.

Buddhist temples once flourished in cities were moved into mountains due to Zen Buddhism's influence, Confucianism's oppression against Buddhism, and other reasons. Therefore, temples are called especially 'mountain temple' and eventually the entire mountain itself is imagined as 'mega temple' as in the Mt. Namsan case. Entering the priesthood is conceptualized as 'entering into mountain'. With this transformation, Buddhists preferred to locate temples in already auspicious mountains and vice versa, mountains accommodating famous temples with reverent monks or Buddhist treasures are evaluated as sacred.

Confucians also made an ideal model of scholarly life that was mostly possible in the mountains, and these concepts and practices contributed to the idea of sacred mountain.

Like their ancestors, contemporary Koreans still believe the superpower of sacred mountains as the auspicious places where they can get the *Gi*. For Koreans, it is no surprise that they praise Mt. *Baekdusan*, the State sacred mountain and Mt. *Namsan*, the State sacred mountain in the capital city of Seoul in their national anthem; moreover, thousands of school songs from elementary schools to universities also admire the local sacred mountains and hope to get the *Gi* from those mountains.

The policies and administration on the mountains and forests has been very strong in Korea. In the pre-modern era (16-19th century), entering the mountain and cutting woods were very strictly prohibited with severe punishment.

These traditions played a significant role in making contemporary state of mountains. 5,397.1 km² or about 5.4 % of whole land (South Korea only) has been managed as 'Green belt' which were mostly drawn on the mountainous areas surrounding major urban areas. The gross area of 6,473 km² (land occupies 3,825 km², while sea covers 2,648 km², South Korea only) or about 6.5% (land marks 3.8%) is designated as 20 'National Parks', of which 16 parks belong to the mountain type. Republic of Korea is regarded internationally as the only country that succeeded in reforestation of territory in 20th century.

Koreans has constructed artificial mountains in positive manner. This practice has been regarded as the supplementary activity to augment the Gi of the landscapes according to Feng Shui. Mounds with stones and soils or forests, big and tall trees, pagodas, statues were the products.

2. Korean Sacred Mountains as Candidates for the World Heritage

(1) Selection Criteria

CATEGORY: In terms of category, sacred mountains are equivalent to the 'Associative Landscapes' among 'Cultural Landscapes', which is a kind of 'Sites' of the 'Cultural Heritage.'

CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES: Universal attributes and Korean attributes of sacred mountains mentioned above are applied with a comparative viewpoint. This work has done by way of scrutinizing those pertinent books, reports and other references.

CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY: As the concept of sacred mountain is newly introduced, mountains of which cultural authenticity were partly proved already received priority. That is, mountain included in the cultural heritage already inscribed on the World Heritage List or mountain recommended to be included on the List deserves to be recommended here.

NATUAL INTEGRITY: The international geological criteria on the morphology of mountain are applied. That is, the elevation difference between the summit and surrounding plain should be over 300m.

The original state of mountain should be well sustained.

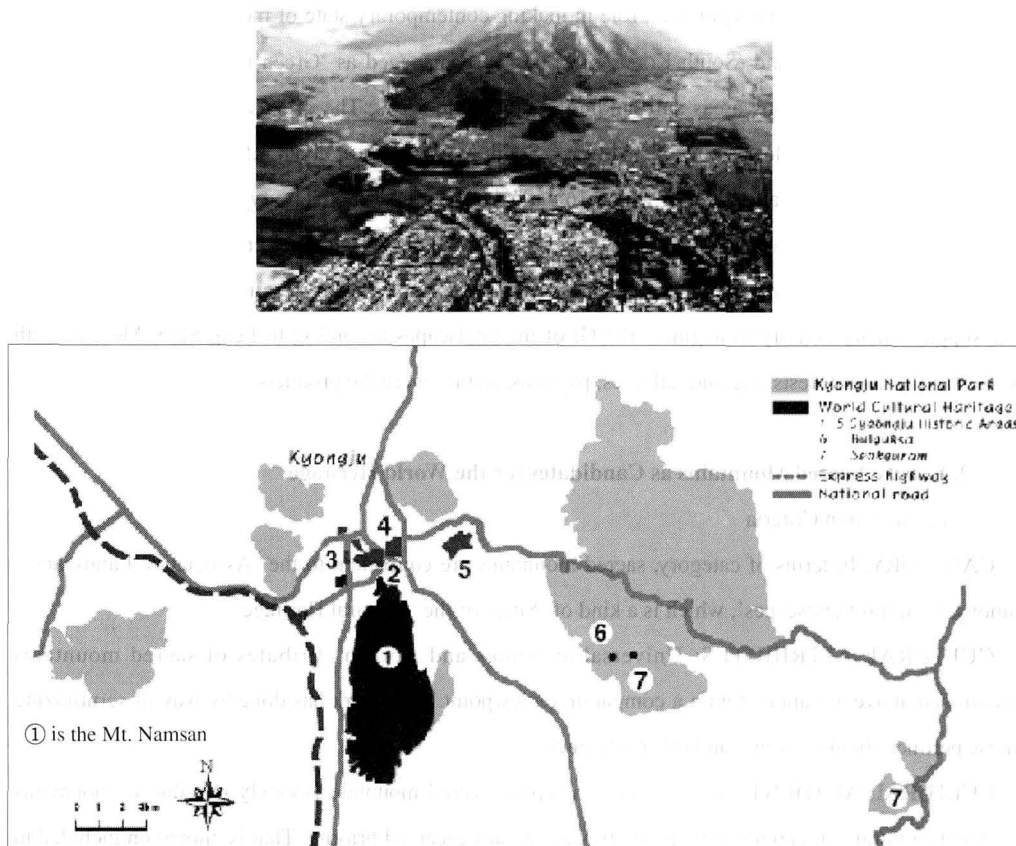
Mountains that are unstable due to volcanoes or earthquake, mining or lumbering, etc. are avoided.

Mountains designated and managed as the National Park are given priority.

(2) The Mt. *Namsan* (南山): Candidate for Sacred Mountain in the already inscribed Cultural Heritage

GEOGRAPHY:

- It lies in the southern part of Kyongju (慶州) City, Kyungsangbukdo Province, Republic of Korea. Kyongju was the capital city of Silla Kingdom (57 BC-935 AD). It covers 26.50 km². The entire area is 3 km from east to west and 6 km from north to south. The whole area lies at 35°44'30"-35°47'30"N,



<Fig. 6> Outline of the Kyongju Historic Areas

THE KYONGJU HISTORIC AREAS

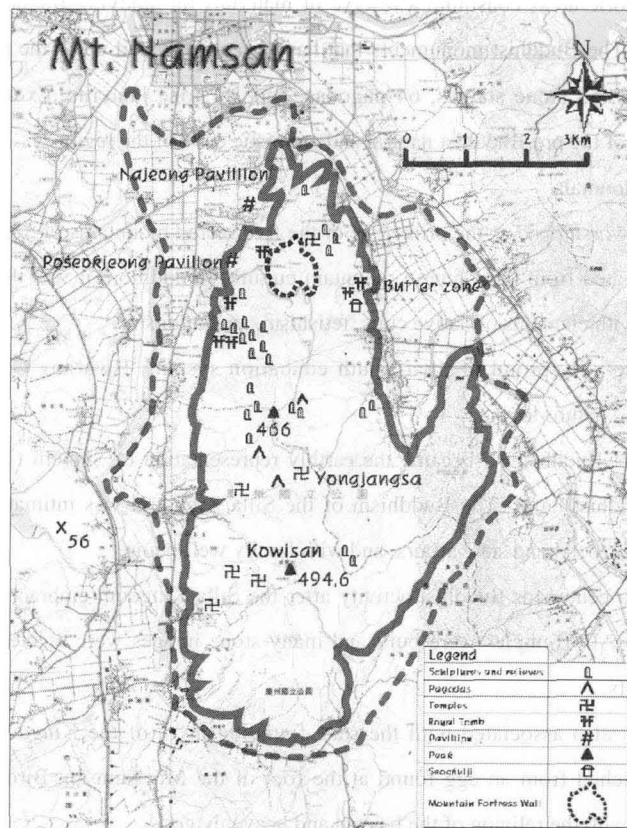
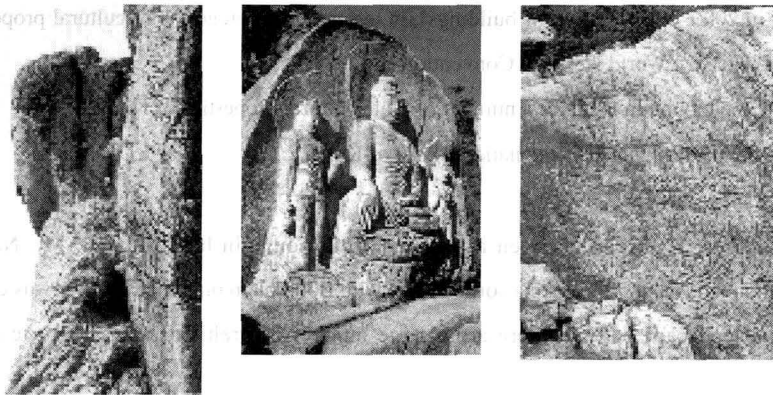
-There are a remarkable concentration of outstanding examples of Korean Buddhist art, in the form of sculptures, relieves, pagodas, and the remains of temples and palaces from the flowering of this form of unique artistic expression. Kyongju City and its surroundings have inherited traces of the glory that flowered and withered in the ancient Silla Kingdom (新羅, 57 BC-935 AD). The center of the town and its suburbs contain many royal burial mounds and Buddhist remains that preserve this apogee of art and culture.

-Three major belts make up the Kyongju Historic Areas: The Mt Namsan Belt, the Wolsong Belt and the Tumuli Park Belt. Additionally the Hwangnyongsa Temple and the Sansong Fortress are included in the inscription. There is one more independent World Cultural Heritage in the Kyongju Area: Sokkuram Grotto and Puluksa Temple (1995).

129°1230~ 129°1700E.

- The highest peak is Kowisan, at 494m, however the main peak admired by people is Kumosan (Mount of Golden Turtle), and 468 m in height. The surrounding plain has an altitude of about 50 m above sea level.

- It is an isolated mountain surrounded by flat land, which is surrounded again by the mountains.



<Fig. 7> Cultural Properties in the Mt. Namsan

Also, it is a well-forested rocky mountain.

CHARACTER OF CULTURAL PROPERTY

-The whole mountain is a part of the 'Kyongju Historic Areas' that was inscribed on the World

Heritage List in 2000. It is 'a group of buildings', in terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention.

-In addition, the mountain contains a number of State cultural properties of Korea.

-The whole area is designated as the national park of Korea.

· Historic Landscapes

-The city plan of Kyongju has been associated with mountain-based layout. Mt. Namsan and surrounding mountains and hills make a sort of basin with flood plain on which the city was constructed. In this natural landscape setting, there are a large number of prehistoric and historic remains of significance.

-The Kyongju historic areas constitute a reserve of materials for studying Buddhist culture and the arts of the Far East. The Buddhist monuments that have been excavated up to the present include the ruins of 122 temples, 53 stone statues, 64 pagodas, and 16 stone lanterns. Excavations have also revealed the remains of the pre-Buddhist natural and animistic cults of the region.

· Sacredness of Mountain

-Mt. Namsan was worshipped as the prime one of the five sacred mountains of Silla Kingdom, which seems to have originated from the Chinese mountain culture. In addition, it was the seat of a refined form of shamanism with elements of native cults, fetishism, and animism.

-Silla people were very proud of their youth education system 'Hwarang'(花郎) based on the mountain-worship and nature-loving.

-With the spread of Buddhism it became the earthly representation of Sumeru (須彌), the heavenly mountain of the Buddhist lands. The Buddhism of the Silla Kingdom was intimately linked with its sovereign power, with social and state affairs, and with family well-being.

The area became a center for Buddhist activity after the Silla Kingdom embraced Buddhism as the state religion in 528 AD. Temples were built and many stone images were erected or carved on the mountain's stony cliffs.

-This Mountain is also associated with the state-founding myth of the Kingdom. The founder is believed to have hatched from an egg found at the foot of the Mt. Namsan. Bird-related myths are generally associated with the religion of the heaven and heavenly gods

-The Mountain was a spiritual refuge for the Silla people. It protected them, literally and figuratively: literally because it stood like a fortress to the south of the capital and figuratively because its peaks and valleys provided ample room for meditation and spiritual rediscovery.

-The history and spirit of the Silla Kingdom lives on at Mt. Namsan, sacred mountain to a brilliant society. Mt. Namsan has been a valuable cultural asset for all Koreans today and a wonderful place for

others to learn about the Korean spirit.

- Cultural Landscapes and Properties

-Its gorges and ridges are embellished with granite pagodas, filigree works, pottery buried in the earth for more than a thousand years, impressive royal graves and palace sites, and stone sculptures and rock-cut relieves of Buddha. It is a sort of treasure house of thousands of relics that embody Buddhist benevolence and law.

-There are 11 rock-cut relieves or engravings, 9 stone images and heads, 3 pagodas, 7 royal tombs or tomb groups, 2 wells, 1 group of stone banner poles, the Namsan Mountain Fortress, the Poseokjeong Pavilion site, and the Seochulji Pond. The rock-cut relieves and engravings and the stone images are fine examples of Shilla Kingdom Buddhist art.

- Conservation and Management

-At the national level, the Cultural Properties Administration is responsible for establishing protection policies and enforcing them. Its subsidiary, the National Research Institute of Cultural Properties, carries out scientific research and field surveys. State Party delegated direct management to the administration of Kyongju City.

-As for the legal status, more than 60 sites and monuments are designated and managed as historic sites under the provisions of the Korean Protection of Cultural Properties Act and Property Protection Ordinance of Kyeongsangbukdo Province. In addition, the entire inscribed area was designated as a national park under the National Park Law. These two sets of protection legislation severely restrict any form of development within the inscribed area.

- The whole area of mountain lies in the Kyongju National Park, which aims at conserving and protecting the healthy natural environments and beautiful natural landscapes. This National Park designated in 1968 not only deals with natural aspects but also embraces all the cultural properties and landscapes located in the Park.

-The surrounding area of the Mt. Namsan is mostly regulated as a green belt, which strictly controls non-agricultural land uses of this area. The existing buffer zone around the Mt. Namsan to protect the cultural property is to be expanded from 100 meters to 500 meters from mid 2001.

-Under these multiple regulations, therefore, the mountain is secured as cultural heritage and national park.

-As for the conservation history, research leading to conservation projects has been in progress on the Kyongju Historic Areas since the 1970s. This has become more coordinated and systematic in the past decade with the formulation and implementation of the management plans.

-There are currently management plans in force for the Kyongju Historic Areas, on the Preservation

of the Original Status of the Historic Areas, Preservation of the Surrounding Environment of the Historic Areas, and Utilizing the Kyongju Historic Areas for the Education of Citizens and for Field Studies by Students.

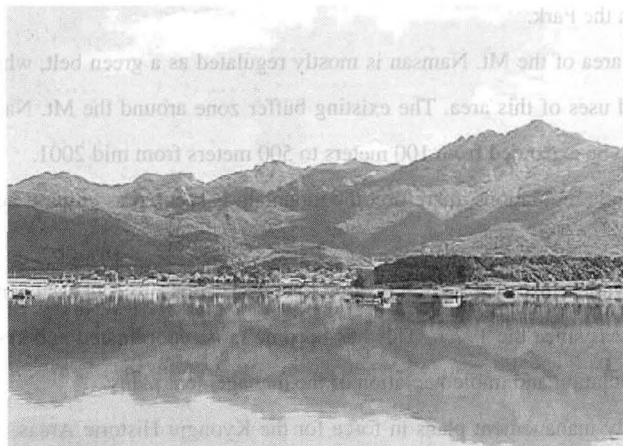
-They include the establishment of long-term plans, the strengthening of measures against forest fires, floods, and other natural calamities, a scientific research program, including archaeological excavations, and a policy of seeking systematic investment and site-management proposals that are eco-friendly and consistent with world-class tourist policies. In addition, there are programs for regular conservation and maintenance of sculptural and monumental antiquities and for selective restoration, based on thorough prior scientific research. There are proposals for the purchase of private land adjoining the protected areas that possibly contain significant archaeological evidence. Regular monitoring will be carried out on the open sites, to check any illegal use of the land for unauthorized burials or shamanistic rites.

-City government of Kyongju has 15 monitors to carry out periodic monitoring. Besides, NGO volunteers such as the 'Mt. Namsan Love Care Society', the Kyongju Cultural Center, honorary administrators of cultural properties, and UNESCO World Cultural Heritage monitoring staffs take an active part in monitoring. They make regular visits to clean around cultural vestiges, hold seminars, act as tour guides, and care for sites in various ways.

(3) Mt. Kyeryongsan (鷄龍山): Candidate for Sacred Mountain recommended for Tentative World Heritage

• GEOGRAPHY:

-It lies in the southern part of Kongju (公州) City, Chungchongnamdo Province, Republic of Korea. Kongju was the capital city of Baekje Kingdom (百濟, 18 BC-660 AD). It is on the border of Taejon, Kongju, and Nonsan cities.



- It covers 61.148 km². The entire area is 8.7 km from east to west and 8 km from north to south. The whole area lies at 36°18'00"-36°24'00"N, 127°10'00"-127°18'00"E.

- The mountain offers incredible scenery of 16 peaks, including its main peak Chonhwangbong (845.1m). The mountain also features 4 fantastic rocks, 7 valleys, 2 waterfalls and other scenic objects form 8 best scenes. The surrounding plain has an altitude of about 30 m above sea level.

- The landform of the highest ridge composed of series of peak looks like a dragon with cockscomb. This is one of the origins of the mountain name.

- This mountain is a sort of independent or isolated monadnock situated in the discontinued area between two mountain ranges. Kumgang River meanders alongside the mountain.

· CHARACTER OF CULTURAL PROPERTY

- There are a number of State Cultural Heritage as well as Natural heritage. As for natural heritage, 6 natural monuments of Korea including musk deer inhabit in this mountain.

- In addition, the mountain contains a number of State cultural properties of Korea. Ancient State altar, mountain spirit's altar, 3 Buddhist temples are the main assets associated with the sacredness of the mountain.

- The whole area is designated as the national park of Korea.

· Historic Landscapes

-Mt. Kyeryongsan was the guardian mountain of the capital city of Baekje Kingdom that once was very prosperous and strong until the Silla Kingdom destroyed it. This Mountain was worshiped as the spiritual basis of the Kingdom, and played as the defense fortress against the neighboring hostile kingdoms.

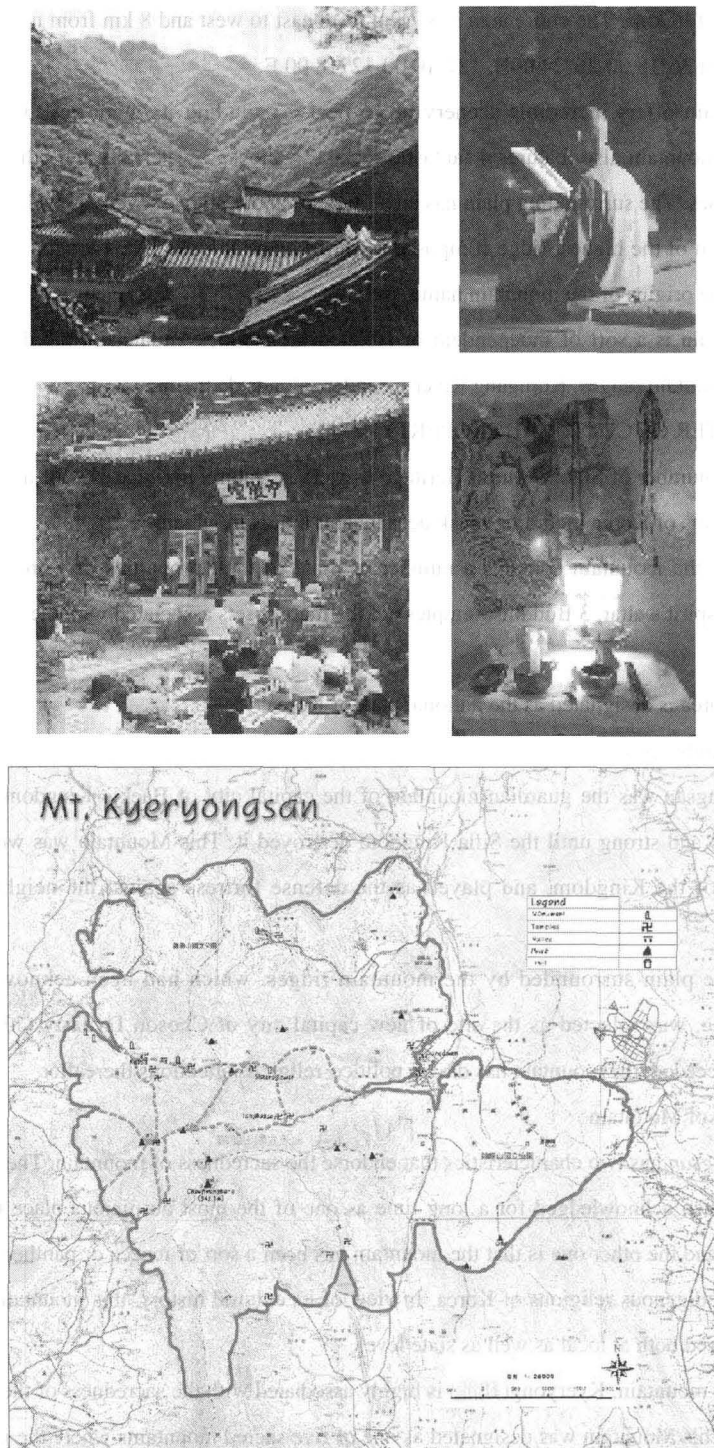
-*Sindoan*, the plain surrounded by the mountain ridges, which had been acknowledged as the auspicious place, was selected as the site of new capital city of Choson Dynasty (1392-1910 AD). Though not succeeded, the mountain has drawn politico-religious attentions thereafter.

· Sacredness of Mountain

-Mt. *Kyeryongsan* has two characteristics that endorse the sacredness of mountain. The one is that this mountain has been acknowledged for a long time as one of the most auspicious place throughout the whole country, and the other one is that the mountain has been a sort of mecca or pantheon or the utopia of the various indigenous religions of Korea. In view of its cultural history, this mountain is still highly esteemed as sacred both at local as well as state level.

-The name of mountain, Kyeryong(鷄龍) is highly associated with the sacredness of the mountain.

-State altar: This Mountain was designated as one of five sacred mountains where the guardian spirits were believed to reside, by the Unified Silla Kingdom. Ever since until 19th century, the royal



<Fig. 8> Cultural Landscapes in the Mt. Kyeryongsan

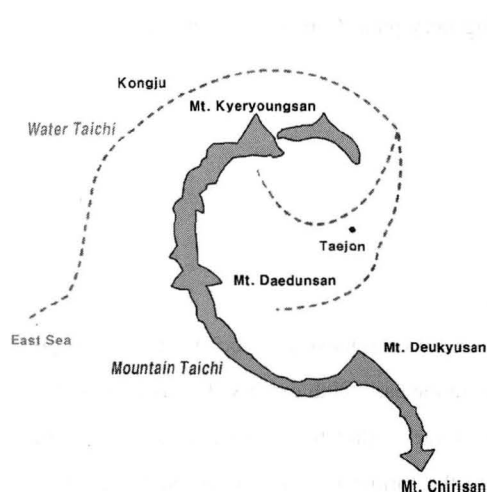
government built the State altar on the auspicious spot in the mountain and performed official rites periodically.

-Sacred Place of Buddhism: There have been 4 major temples built on four cardinal orientations (one had been in ruins). Donghaksa Temple (921 AD-) contains the altar for the loyal Confucian scholars and now runs the oldest education institution for the Buddhist nun. Gapsa Temple (679 AD-) possesses the variety of State Treasure.

Especially Sinwaonsa Temple (651 AD-) that was associated with the nation-building process of Choson Dynasty contains the above-mentioned State altar. The name meaning of Sinwon was changed from the shrine or altar(神院) for State prosperity and peace to the new beginning(新元) at the end of 19th century. It is quite exceptional that the strictly Confucianism-based government supported these temples.

-Auspicious Place by Feng Shui: Since the Feng Shui was accepted as the environmental guideline in pre-modern era, Mt. Kyeryongsan has been regarded as one of the most auspicious places in the Korean Peninsula. The interpretation of this mountain in terms of Feng Shui is that this mountain and entwining Kumgang River form respectively the mountain taichi(山太極)and water taichi(水太極), and these two taichi form the double, very auspicious taichi. Another interpretation is that the land forms of this mountain and related mountains in the Peninsula manifest the form of “a dragon retracing to the ancestor”(回龍顧祖形), which also has been esteemed very auspicious by the geomancers.

The other interpretation in fact has drawn strong and continuous attention of indigenous religionists. According to the ‘Chunggamrok’, Book of Prophecy, this mountain is blessed to become the sacred site



Mountain & Water taichi (山太極 & 水太極)



A dragon retracing to the ancestor (回龍顧祖形)

for a certain forthcoming dynasty. In addition, this mountain has been regarded as one of 10 places that are very safe against wars and other misfortunes.

- Utopia of indigenous religions: With these fortune-telling prophecies, this mountain and the Sindoan in particular became the common sacred place and shrines of the various indigenous religions. Here they claimed their own utopias or expected creation of new worlds. The most well known religion is the Chundogyo or the Religion of Heavenly Way that embraces the Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism altogether. This mountain, full of sacred powers, has been using intensively as a sort of recharge place for the shamans of the whole country.

· Cultural Landscapes

-This mountain is one of best samples that form unique cultural landscapes upon the basis of natural landscapes of excellent beauty)

-There are 8 most scenic attractions among the various natural landscapes of the mountain. The first scene is the Sunrise at the Highest Peak; the second is the Snowcap on the Three Buddha's; the third is the Sunset at the Yonchonbong Peak; the forth is the lazy clouds over the Kwanombong Peak. The fifth is the spring green in the Donghaksa Gorge; the sixth is the autumn-tinted Gapsa Gorge; the seventh is the sea of cloud and mist around the Hidden Spirits Waterfall, the eighth is the bright moon over the Twin Pagodas.

-No matter how these visible landscapes are splendid, however, intangible landscapes formed with the religious ideas and rituals for more than one thousand long years are more valuable in this case.

-This mountain embraces 2 pieces of State Treasure including Buddhist paintings, 7 pieces of Treasure and 9 pieces of local cultural property.

-Also musk deer and 6 species of bird including fairy pitta, Chinese sparrow hawk, and kestrel are protected here as natural monument.

III. Discussion and Conclusion

1. Environmental Conservation

(1) Aspects of Environmental Conservation

Environmental conservation in modern era has been originated as a social activity and policy for 'efficient use of resources in the future generation' in the early 20th century. This is coincident with the sustainable development; however one point to see is that the latter focuses on the balanced development of whole living things in contrast to the former that was based on the anthropocentric utilization of environment. Therefore, contemporary and future environmental conservation might be re-

defined as something to do with sustainable development.

Environmental conservation is a purposeful action to sustain or improve the original or existing, desirable status of environment. However, it is also very important to restore the existing environment which are hardly destroyed or devastate to the original state.

Institutionalization (1/law, administration, planning, etc.), community participation (2), taboo (3) are major means of environmental conservation. In the past, conservation was conducted with the power of 3-2-1 order; however, contemporary conservation seems to rely on the mean (1). Mean (2) is employed in passive manner and mean (3) has been disappeared mostly.

Institutionalization-oriented environmental conservation puts its rationale on the law. However, this kind of action also calls for science which provides the necessity and method of conservation. Therefore, this kind of conservation requires rationality and conformity.

In this context, goals, objects and methods of conservation are to be discussed in light of the sacredness.

(2) Subjects of Environmental Conservation and the Sacredness

Environment is this paper is defined as a complex composed of diversified elements, and is the conditions for survival.

It is basically not possible to preserve the whole environment constantly and permanently. In addition, conservation as public action needs lots of public resources. Thus, it is required to decide the objects for conservation in a highly rational manner.

Identification of objects to be conserved has two aspects of awareness and study. Study on the objects is the analysis and research conducted in scientific methods, which mainly rely on the off-site, indirect remote-sensing by the outsiders. Consequently sacred objects, places and sites of which cultural significance were conserved and respected for a long time are liable to be neglected. On-site and direct study is required to identify the very objects to be conserved and the concept of sacredness seem to be very contributable to this kind of identification.

But, the 'awareness' of significance and value of conservation is no less important. No matter how important the environment is, it is of no use without any people who concerns the very environment. In particular, awareness of members of concerned community is the highest important thing, and the concept of sacredness is helpful to enlighten and improve the awareness.

(3) The Rationale of Environmental Conservation

The rationale of environmental conservation in the past was mainly anthropocentric and the subjects for conservation were 'resources' (1/ land, underground, water, forests and living things, etc.) that are to be kept for the efficient utilization in the future. In these process the existence of other living things and

even the native people were thoroughly neglected.

Nowadays the importance of 'environment' (2/ climate, water, habitat, etc.) is highly regarded. This aims at sustaining the entire ecosystem which contains not only human-being but also other species.

In addition, recent attention is paid to the 'landscape' (3/ scenery), which is regarded not as mere object of visual enjoyment, but as media to express and prove the existence of sound environment.

The existence of things and sites esteemed as sacred for a considerably long period were not formulated from mere, non-scientific, or spiritual stand. Contrarily these were made possible to get reason for being, since the significant influence to the sustainable development of those communities that hold those sacred things and sites was proved in terms of life experience of the people. This is especially the case of the mountain that itself is a very important ecosystem and plays a fundamental role to the life of living things within its influential sphere. The above-mentioned UNESCO Meeting was successful in its finding and proving of still-active power of sacredness that are very helpful to the sustainable development of concerned community.

2. Preservation, Administration and Utilization

(1) The mountain itself and cultural ruins

1) Issues

Sacred mountains have been formed and transformed continuously as a part of natural environment, which experiences continuous changes through natural process, and there are quite many things mankind can not control. Therefore, there would be many cases where sacred mountains will be administered by different systems.

We need more rational and convenient way to preserve those ruins and relics usually located in the sacred mountains from the natural process of change.

2) Suggestion

It is desirable to designate the mountain and its adjacent areas as a national park or equivalent one.

The present conservation system for the individual cultural ruins and relics as cultural assets is to be kept, but should be incorporated to the management system for the whole mountain.

(2) Possession, Supervisory Authority

1) Issues

In many cases the possession and the management authority over the mountain itself and ruins and relics are separated. In these cases serious problems may occur.

When multiple nations or countries or religions are related to a specific sacred mountain, there happen to appear an ethno-centrism or religion-centrism, and some tension or trouble may occur.

2) Suggestion

The State Party should establish and implement effective policies and plans to convert the whole mountain to public-owned or public-managed land on a long term. Methods of purchase, exchange and entrust of land, may be useful.

If sacred mountains lay across boundaries of multiple countries, pertinent country should jointly designate and manage with the support of UNESCO and other international agencies (e.g. The Waterton Glacier International Peace Park).

The possibilities of trouble should be strictly examined in the process of inscription and effective measures to prevent and mitigate troubles should be made in advance.

(3) Cognition and Use

1) Issues

Sacred Mountains are usually related to religions and in many cases primitive religions or indigenous religions that are sometimes disregarded as superstition. Therefore, some misunderstandings and complications may occur in preserving and managing sacred mountains.

Many sacred mountains formed and maintained throughout the traditional ages lost their sacredness and became quite profane since the modern cultures deprived the sacredness of almost everything.

Candidates for sacred mountain have generally favorable natural environment or landscape, which can be actively preserved on one hand but may be actively developed on the other hand. This fact indicates the necessity as well as difficulty of the attractive mountain to be sacred.

Candidate Mountains have been actively used as places of climbing, tourism and recreation activity. When inscribed as sacred mountains, drastically increasing visitors and consequent damages on cultural as well as natural environments and landscapes are expected.

2) Suggestion

The local people in the concerned culture area are endorsed and encouraged to participate in the process of inscription and management work to rediscover the value of the concerned mountain.

It is asked to establish and manage a service system combining cultural tourism and eco-tourism systems.

3. Conclusion

(1) Korean Case

Two candidate mountains are presented here: First one is Mt. Namsan within the Kyongju Historic Areas which are already inscribed on the World Heritage, and second one is Mt. Kyeryongsan which is being recommended by Korean State Party to include on the tentative list.

Present cultural criteria of the UNESCO are observed while natural criteria are assumed to be fulfilled since the mountains are designated and managed as the national parks.

(2) Validity of the Concept of Sacred Mountain

At the cultural aspect, the sacred mountains are very meaningful conceptually as well as practically, and are deserved to be designated, conserved and respected as the cultural heritage at the world level.

It is my understanding that the purpose of this expert meeting is not to designate specific mountains as Sacred Mountain officially, but to discuss comparatively various types of mountains which various culture groups regard and esteem sacred; and to identify various concepts, category and forms; and establish some universal criteria.

One important point is that the concept and institution of sacred mountain is to confirm the commonness and diversity of cultures. Therefore, disorientation to specific religions or ethnic groups is highly avoided.

An important usefulness of sacred mountain is that it can revitalize the forgotten cultures to respect and love the nature, and support the efforts toward a sustainable world. The mountain that stands firm above the cloud has been the very symbol of sustainability.

(3) Further Studies

Academic, cross-cultural studies and surveys on the cultures of sacred mountain are asked, beyond the scope of this very meeting where the possibilities of inscription are mainly discussed.

To make further progress beyond this meaningful and useful expert meeting, some more discussions are required in the future.

- There are varieties of cultures on the sacred mountain and not a few sacred mountains exist without the Asia-Pacific Region. Therefore, we have to look around outside of the Region to find more diversified sacred mountains. Especially cross-cultural or comparative studies on the mountains and places of sacred in those three countries (China, Japan and Korea) which shares common cultures are worth conducting.

- The sacredness is not limited exclusively to mountains. Caves, water bodies, forests and so on are also eligible to be sacred places. Therefore, other opportunities to discuss on these subjects are expected to be provided by the UNESCO.

Comparative studies of State cultures with universal cultures on sacred mountains are to be done to find commonness and difference, and to identify outstanding universal value.

(4) Conclusion

As a conclusion, I would like to underline the following points.

Some things, places, and sites are sacred not because these are sacred, but because some being is

believed to manifest itself in these.

Some things, places, and sites had been conserved because these are sacred. However, people's awareness of the sacredness is very helpful to environmental conservation, since the sacredness is some sort of belief which exists only with the people or community.

References

- Proceedings of the UNESCO Thematic Expert Meeting on Asia-Pacific Sacred Mountains (2001), UNESCO World Heritage Center.
- Bernbaum, Edwin (1997), *Sacred Mountains of the World*, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.
- Cooper, Adrian (1997), *Sacred Mountains: Ancient Wisdom and Modern Meanings*. Edinburgh: Floris Books.
- Einarsen, John, ed. (1993), *The Sacred Mountains of Asia*, London: Shambhala Publications, Inc.
- Eliade, Mircea (1996), *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, University of Nebraska Press.
- Freeman, Michael & Shearer, Alistair (2000), *The Spirit of Asia*, London: Thames and Hudson Ltd.
- Hamma, Robert M. (1999), *Landscapes of the Soul: a Spirituality of Place*, Notre Dam: Ave Maria Press.
- Mason, David A. (1999), *Spirit of the Mountains: Korea's SAN-SHIN and Traditions of Mountain-Worship*, New Jersey: Hollym International Corp.
- Molyneaux, Brian Leigh & Vitebsky, Piers (2000), *Sacred Earth, Sacred Stones*, London: Duncan Baird Publishers.
- Munakata, Kiyohiko (1991), *Sacred Mountains in Chinese Art*, University of Illinois Press.
- Pettis, Chuck, (1999), *Secrets of Sacred Spaces*, St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications.
- Swan, James A. (1991), *The Power of Place: Sacred Ground in Natural & Human Environments*, Wheaton: The Theosophical Publishing House.
- Wilson, Collin (1996), *The Atlas of Holy Places & Sacred Sites*, N.Y.: DK Publishing, Inc.
- Baekje Culture Development Institute (1995), *Mt. Kyeryongsan Area Ruins and Remains*.
- Choi, Chung-Ho, ed. (1993), *Mountain and Korean's Life*, Seoul: Nanam Publishing Co.
- Choi, Young-Joo (1992), *New Korean Feng Shui*, Seoul: Donghak Publishing Co.
- Chungchongnamdo (1994), *The Chronicle of Mt. Kyeryongsan*.
- Chung, Chong-Soo (1996), *Mt. Kyeryongsan*, Seoul: Daewon Publishing Co.
- Hyun., Jin-Sang (2000), *Sankyungpyo*, Seoul: Pulbit publishing Co.
- Hwang., Keewon (1995), *The City Prismatic*, Seoul: Yolhwadang Pulbit publishing

Kim, Hyung-Kook, ed. (1999), *Land and Korean's Life*, Seoul: Nanam Publishing Co.

Lee, Kil-ku (1996), *Mt. Kyeryongsan*, Seoul: Daemoon Publishing Co.

Yoon, Kyung-Ryul (1989), *Mt. Namsan at the Kyongju, 1 & 2*, Seoul: Daewonsa Publishing Co.

<http://www.npa.or.kr> (Korean National Park Authority)

<http://www.unesco.org/whc>

<http://www.ocp.go.kr> (Korean Cultural Properties Administration)

<http://korea.insights.co.kr>